

*Bill Will Also Aid Gulf Communities Impacted By Spill*  
July 27, 2010

WASHINGTON, DC — Today, U.S. Congressman Charlie Melancon (LA-03) voted in support of funding for U.S. troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. The *Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2010* (H.R. 4899), which passed the House with strong bipartisan support, also includes aid to Gulf Coast communities impacted by the BP oil disaster. In addition, the bill replenishes FEMA's Disaster Relief Fund, which will pay for ongoing recovery projects across the country, including rebuilding the Medical Center of Louisiana (formerly, New Orleans' Charity Hospital).

**"As long as our Louisiana servicemen and women are fighting for our country abroad, I will continue voting in Congress to supply them with the equipment and resources they need to get the job done, and for the benefits they have earned when they return home,"** said Rep. Melancon.

**"Supporting our troops is not just a slogan. It is a promise to our men and women in uniform, and to their families, that we will stand with them each and every time we are called to do so. I am proud to vote once again to support our troops and veterans."**

As passed by the House today, the legislation **does not** rescind \$400 million from Louisiana's Road Home program, as earlier versions of the bill did. Congressman Melancon strongly opposed these cuts, arguing that the families in Louisiana still needed the funding to continue restoring and rebuilding homes destroyed by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and to mitigate damage caused by toxic Chinese drywall in rebuilt homes.

In a [letter](#) to Senate leadership last week, Congressman Melancon wrote, **"The damage from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita was unlike any seen in the U.S. in recent memory. These hurricanes left six out of 10 homes in New Orleans uninhabitable."**

Melancon continued, **"Should Congress rescind these remaining funds, as many as 19,000 homeowners statewide could be forced to return to un-restored and blighted homes as many low-to-moderate income families have no other means to rebuild. Further, there are also families who fell victim to fraudulent contractors or found toxic Chinese drywall after their homes were rebuilt. These families are still struggling to fully recover."**

With House passage today, the Supplemental now goes to the President's desk to be signed into law.

### **Iraq and Afghanistan**

The *Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2010* provides \$37.12 billion for U.S. military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, including funding for the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicle, a new class of "Humvee" that is more resistant to improvised explosive devices (IEDs). The bill will also invest in more robust military intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance efforts, and will be used to replace and repair vehicles, equipment and supplies depleted by the wars.

### **FEMA Disaster Funding**

The Supplemental also includes \$5.1 billion to replenish the FEMA Disaster Relief Fund. This funding is needed to pay for known costs for past disasters, such as Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Ike, and Gustav, and for needs that emerge from new disasters. In Louisiana, FEMA Disaster Relief Funding is needed to rebuild the Medical Center of Louisiana (formerly, New Orleans' Charity Hospital), and for other ongoing recovery projects.

### **Gulf Oil Disaster**

In part, the following investments in oil disaster response and recovery were included in Supplemental Appropriations Act, as passed by the House today:

- o **\$46 Million to Aid Commercial Fishermen.** The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) will provide fisheries disaster relief for commercial fishing operations that have been affected by the oil spill, for conducting research into the economic impact of the spill on the fishing industry, and other projects related to the oil disaster.
- o **\$29 Million for Rig Safety Inspections.** The Interior Department will conduct increased inspections, enforcement, investigations, environmental and engineering studies, and other activities related to the oil spill.
- o **\$5 Million for Economic Development.** The Commerce Department will provide economic development assistance to Louisiana and other states affected by the oil spill.
- o **\$2 Million for EPA Study on Risks of Oil and Dispersants.** The Environmental Protection Agency will conduct a study on the potential human and environmental risks and effects of the release of crude oil and the application of other chemicals to combat the oil spill.
- o **\$2 Million for Seafood Safety Monitoring.** The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) will monitor seafood safety and conduct other response activities related to the oil spill.

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